

News from U.S. Rep. John Spratt (D-SC)
Assistant to the Democratic Leader
Ranking Member, Committee on the Budget
U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, D.C.
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SC Delegation Secures Distance Learning Funds

WASHINGTON – The South Carolina congressional delegation last week secured \$500,000 to help the state's technical colleges expand their network access to under-served and rural areas. The funding was included in a spending bill Congress passed February 13.

"South Carolina's technical colleges have earned a nationwide reputation for excellence," said U.S. Rep. John Spratt (DC), the top Democrat on the House Budget Committee. "Far too many of South Carolina's counties are underdeveloped, and limited access to technical training is a large part of this problem. Expanding network access to proven technical college programs will help to expand educational opportunities to rural and underdeveloped areas that need it most. I was proud to support this effort to secure federal funds for this worthwhile project."

Spratt said the South Carolina Technical College Program last year served 234,372 students on 16 main campuses and a number of satellite campuses. With the expansion of Internet access and the development of distance learning, accessing these educational opportunities has become easier, especially for residents of rural areas. Students who previously were unable to attend classes because of distance or finances can now take classes locally through the Internet from teachers located many miles away.

With federal funds, the South Carolina Technical College System will expand access to under-served and rural communities through the enhancement of the system's statewide distance-learning network. It will develop a system-wide, integrated network infrastructure capable of supporting voice, video, and data using the Internet, and will expand its network to two remote classroom sites and a main campus site per college. It would also provide for the purchase, installation, and maintenance of equipment to support simultaneous programming at all sites.

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